



Assembly Member **JARED HUFFMAN**

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CONTACT: Paige Brokaw

Paige.Brokaw@asm.ca.gov

(916) 319-2006

Resolution Urges Funding to Cities who fight Gang Activity

Gang Activity is Responsible for Thousands of Homicides a Year in California

Sacramento, CA – Today, Assemblymembers Jared Huffman (D-Marin), Jose Solorio (D-Anaheim) and Anna Caballero (D-Salinas) introduced Assembly Joint Resolution (AJR) 40 to urge the federal government to reward states and local governments that develop comprehensive plans for addressing, suppressing and preventing gang violence when distributing its limited federal funds.

Gangs are responsible for numerous crimes including murder, witness intimidation, money laundering, extortion, narcotic production and sales, prostitution, human trafficking, theft and counterfeiting. In spite of an overall decrease in crime in most California cities since the 1990's, rates of gang-related violent crime remain steady. According to the Governor's Office of Gang and Youth Violence Policy, gang activity in California resulted in 2,771 homicides between 2005 and 2007.

The U.S. Attorney General recently announced a recommendation for increased federal funding for cities to develop comprehensive planning and action to confront youth and gang violence prevention. Available federal resources are and will continue to be limited, and maximizing how far to stretch each dollar is pivotal to local success. AJR 40 urges the federal government to provide greater flexibility when appropriating federal funds to encourage local governments to implement comprehensive plans that blend prevention of gang participation, intervention of at-risk youth and offenders, and suppression of crime activity. AJR 40 also demonstrates California's commitment to the prevention of gang violence, which will make our state more competitive for future federal funding.

"I am pleased to work with Assemblymembers Huffman and Caballero to encourage federal funding of the most effective and evidence-based programs for anti-gang and youth violence prevention, intervention and suppression," said Assemblymember Solorio. "I helped Governor Schwarzenegger launch California's CalGRIP program and have fought to protect its funding. The CalGRIP's three-year results are undeniable. Evidence-based programs work and should be expanded with additional funding from federal sources."

"Gang violence is a harsh reality in our communities. Just last week, a six year old boy was caught in the crossfire between rival gang members and was hit by a stray bullet while in his kitchen," said Assemblymember Caballero. "When children and teenagers are no longer safe in

their own home, we must do everything in our power and use every resource to ensure this does not happen again. The State of California needs to be on record that we support comprehensive planning at the local level to combat this part of illegal, criminal activity. Together with our federal partners we can focus our efforts on strategies that actually work and support community efforts to create peaceful neighborhoods.”

“California has evidenced its pledge to reduce gang recruitment, violence and victimization through an organized task force of 13 major cities dedicated to sharing information and working together on community-wide plans. Other communities will be encouraged to do the same if federal resources reward comprehensive planning and allow flexibility for creativity,” added Assemblymember Huffman.

“Gang violence is a community-wide problem that has a profound effect on both individuals and institutions—schools, hospitals, businesses—on which a healthy, safe community rests,” said John Calhoun, Senior Consultant National League of Cities and Director of The California Cities Gang Prevention Network. “A community-wide problem necessitates a community-wide, comprehensive strategy that blends prevention, intervention and enforcement. Thus, resources to address the problem must come from those related to law enforcement, to those addressing jobs, education and housing. The federal government must make every possible effort to give priority to jurisdictions with sound, comprehensive strategies and to provide greater access to, and more flexible use of, federal funds from a variety of sources.”

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